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# Leadership Competition and Disagreement at Party National Congresses

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## Abstract:

Theories often explain intra-party competition based on electoral conditions and intra-party rules. We further open this black box by considering intra-party statements of preferences. In particular, we predict that intra-party preference heterogeneity increases after electoral losses, but candidates deviating from the party’s median receive fewer intra-party votes. Party members grant candidates greater leeway to accommodate competing policy demands when in government. We test our hypotheses with a new database of party congress speeches from Germany and France and use automated text classification to estimate speakers’ relative preferences. The results demonstrate that speeches at party meetings provide valuable insights into actors’ preferences and intra-party politics. We find evidence of a complex relationship between governing context, the economy and intra-party disagreement.

Key Words: Party Congresses, Intra-Party Politics, Leadership Selection,  
WORDFISH

Theories of party politics often make strong assumptions about the relationship between parties' behavior and the preferences of intra-party actors. For example, scholars frequently assume that parties act as if they are unitary actors and that the party leader represents the median preferences of the party's membership. Despite substantial theoretical development and a number of detailed case studies, few cross-national analyses of intra-party politics consider the role of intra-party preferences.<sup>1</sup> This absence is striking. Intra-party politics and party preferences hold implications for a large range of political processes such as election campaigns, legislative politics and coalition governance.<sup>2</sup>

Building on these studies, we develop a theory of intra-party preferences and party leader selection by considering experiences in government and intra-party electoral rules. Broadly, we theorize that parties' electoral context influences the party's internal preference diversity. We then argue that candidates' statements of preferences influence their intra-party electoral success. Candidates that express preferences closer to the party's ideological center attract more votes than more extreme candidates.

To empirically test hypotheses from our theory, we create a new data set of intra-party actor preferences from their statements at party national congresses. By focusing on speeches at intra-party meetings, we begin to break open the black box of intra-party politics. Despite evidence that parties act as if they are internally divided in parliament, few studies seek to directly, quantitatively analyze the

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<sup>1</sup> For prominent counter examples see Laver and Shepsle 1996; Diermeier and Feddersen 1998; Adams 1999; Debus and Bräuninger 2008; Kenig 2009a and 2009b, Lehrer 2012; Philippov and Rahat 2013; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Laver 1999; McElwain 2007; Meguid 2008; Carey 2009; Kam 2009; Spoon 2011; Ceron 2012 and 2013.

preferences of actors outside of this arena.<sup>3</sup> Historically, intra-party actors' preferences have proven complicated to measure. Limited data has created a major hurdle in testing theories of intra-party politics. We overcome this hurdle by using actors' speeches at meetings of party national congresses. Like recent research studying political documents,<sup>4</sup> we use automated text analysis to measure the relative location of intra-party actors' statements of preferences by analyzing their speeches at parties' congresses. We apply the scaling method *WORDFISH*<sup>5</sup> to estimate actors' ideological positions and the distance between actors within the party. This method allows us to compare actors' relative statements of preferences across multiple political settings. We then use these estimates to study the relationship between intra-party disagreement and experiences in government and elections. In a second analysis, we predict party leadership elections at national congresses from the relative location of speakers' preferences.

The results from our analysis are consistent with an explanation of intra-party politics focused on the party's internal rules and electoral context. Likewise, the results indicate that our measures provide meaningful estimates of the location of intra-party actors' preferences that can be adapted to fit numerous research goals. More broadly, we find evidence of a complex relationship between parties' electoral performance, experiences in government and intra-party division.

In the following section, we discuss previous studies of intra-party politics and leadership selection before considering previous approaches to studying actors' preferences. We then describe the role of party congresses in political party behavior and outline our empirically testable hypotheses predicting two dependent variables:

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<sup>3</sup> see Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013 or Ceron 2012 and 2013 for prominent counter-examples.

<sup>4</sup> Slapin and Proksch 2008; Ceron 2012 and 2013; Proksch and Slapin 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Slapin and Proksch 2008.

intra-party division and party leadership selection. Following a discussion of our data collection and approach, we illustrate differences in parties' disagreement over time and show how the positions of individual party actors are linked to leadership selections at the parties' national congresses. The results from both sets of analyses provide important insights into the study of political party behavior and offer a new approach for scholars to understand and measure intra-party actors' statements of preferences.

## PERSPECTIVES ON INTRA-PARTY POLITICS

Researchers show that political parties' preferences are important for understanding electoral behavior and government outcomes. Little consensus exists surrounding the intra-party process that yields parties' statements of preferences such as election manifestos. Scholars have previously considered intra-party politics from spatial or organizational perspectives.

Many studies from a spatial perspective assume that party leaders represent the median preferences within the party or that the leaders' preferences exemplify the broader organization's goals.<sup>6</sup> The relative location of parties' statements of preferences is frequently considered to be strategically chosen or selectively emphasized to maximize the votes the party receives in an election.<sup>7</sup> They argue that parties selectively emphasize their preferences to attract voters who in return select parties which they expect will be most likely to implement their policy goals.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Downs 1957; Laver and Shepsle 1996; Tsebelis 2002.

<sup>7</sup> see for example Downs; 1957; Adams 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Downs 1957; Adams 1999; Adams and Merrill 1999, 2005 and 2006; Tsebelis 2002; Adams et al. 2006; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Adams et al. 2009; Carey 2009; Kam 2009.

Spatial theories frequently rely on the assumption that parties act as if they are unitary actors. This assumption requires that the intra-party organizational process generating parties' campaign messages does not have a direct impact on their exact location. These theories treat party organizations as black boxes in which their leaders and statements of preferences are chosen for strategic electoral or policy motivated reasons.<sup>9</sup> While spatial theories do not uniformly require parties to behave as unitary actors,<sup>10</sup> clear evidence shows that parties' elected representatives act counter to the parties' goals in numerous settings.<sup>11</sup> Members of parliament frequently exhibit diverse opinions which do not correspond to the party leaders' preferences on roll call votes<sup>12</sup> and their speeches in parliament.<sup>13</sup> Party leaders use parliamentary procedures and the benefits of office to maintain party unity in parliament,<sup>14</sup> although members of parliament also have opportunities to publically dissent from the party line.<sup>15</sup>

Few studies, however, directly analyze intra-party politics and their influence on parties' preferences, although empirical research of parliamentary behavior demonstrates that intra-party divisions frequently constrain party leaders.<sup>16</sup> Representatives from the same party regularly deviate from the preferences of the party's leadership in election campaigns and in their behavior in parliament.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Strøm 1990.

<sup>10</sup> Diermeier and Feddersen 1998; Debus and Bräuninger 2008.

<sup>11</sup> see for example Hug and Schulz 2007; O'Brien and Shomer 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Huber 1996; Hug and Schulz 2007; Carrubba et al. 2008; Clinton and Lapinski 2008; Ceron 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Bernauer and Bräuninger 2009; Proksh and Slapin 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Cox and McCubbins 1993 and 2005; Huber 1996; Döring 2003; Ceron 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Huber 1996; Rosas and Shomer 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Bowler et al. 1999; Laver 1999; Carey 2009; Kam 2009.

<sup>17</sup> McElwain 2007; Meguid 2008; Carey 2009; Kam 2009; Ceron 2012 and 2013.

Scholars assume party leaders generally receive the support from large majorities of intra-party supporters, but internal party competitors may be able to mobilize the support of groups with diverse political interests within the party. Modern, catch-all parties frequently assemble diverse political supporters, each of which would prefer their policy goals as the party's priority.<sup>18</sup>

Scholars of party organizations instead study intra-party politics through the lens of internal institutional rules. These studies show that intra-party organizational characteristics such as the method of leadership selection, changes in party memberships and change in factional dominance influence parties' statements of preferences.<sup>19</sup> For example, Harmel and Janda theorize that party leadership selection and factional dominance influence the party's preferences.<sup>20</sup> Under contexts that lead to changes in leadership and the dominant faction, such as large electoral losses or exogenous shocks, the party's message also likely changes.<sup>21</sup> Kitschelt adds that experiences in government and electoral results influence the composition of parties' membership and that this eventually impacts the long term direction of the leadership.<sup>22</sup> However, dynamics in numerous democracies have caused parties to rely less on their memberships for running electoral campaigns. As a consequence, parties have become more hierarchically organized.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, parties that provide greater influence to party members and voters in leadership selection attract

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<sup>18</sup> Kirchheimer 1990.

<sup>19</sup> Ceron 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Janda et al. 1994; Harmel et al. 1995; Harmel and Tan 2003; Hazan and Rahat 2006; Kenig 2009b.

<sup>22</sup> Kitschelt 1989.

<sup>23</sup> Tan 1997; Van Biezen et al. 2012

a larger number of candidates for office, but fewer intra-party candidates receive most of the votes.<sup>24</sup>

Both spatial and organizational perspectives have given us substantial insights into preferences and party politics. Little research from either perspective, however, directly studies the causes and consequences of intra-party preference heterogeneity. In the following sections, we propose a theory linking the range of intra-party preferences to their electoral context and consider the implications of intra-party preferences for party leadership selection.

## THE CAUSES OF INTRA-PARTY HETEROGENEITY

Intra-party preference heterogeneity holds important implications for a range of political outcomes. Studying its causes will allow us to better understand the decision-making process leading to parties' election and policy behavior. In general, we propose that the party's electoral and governmental performance influences intra-party politics.

Like previous research on party change,<sup>25</sup> we expect that there are numerous factors that likely influence intra-party politics and the information party leaders have about the distribution of preferences within the party. Scholars have theorized that major events, such as elections or losing government positions will alter parties' internal composition and rules. Kitschelt suggests that experience in government and previous electoral results influence the types of activists, supporters and politicians that join parties.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Przeworski and Sprague find that Socialist parties' internal organizational structures became more hierarchical as they gained

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<sup>24</sup> Kenig 2009b.

<sup>25</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Kitschelt 1989.



experience in office.<sup>27</sup> Harmel and Janda add that major electoral defeats provide the opportunity for changes in factional dominance.<sup>28</sup>

Building on these studies, we predict electoral success and experience in government influence intra-party politics. Parties that are electorally successful likely attract more pragmatic supporters hoping to benefit from the party's access to government.<sup>29</sup> So long as the party's leadership maintains electoral support, intra-party competitors will bandwagon or link themselves to the leaders' reputations to curry favor with the leader and groups within the party. Due to this pragmatic bandwagon behavior, intra-party disagreements are likely to be limited when the leadership attracts sufficient electoral support for the party.

However, competition between groups within the party increases when one faction or group sees an opportunity to expand its influence. Following electoral defeat, intra-party groups place the blame on the dominant party leaders and factions for these losses.<sup>30</sup> To clearly distinguish themselves from the previous leader's reputation, challengers arise within the party who offer distinct alternatives from the current leader's preferences. Large electoral defeats lead groups to challenge the party leaders' preferences to differentiate themselves from the parties' previous direction. This logic leads us to our first hypothesis that predicts intra-party disagreement increases in response to electoral loss.

*H1) Electoral losses increase intra-party disagreement.*

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<sup>27</sup> Przeworski and Sprague 1986.

<sup>28</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Kitschelt 1989.

<sup>30</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994.

Furthermore, we add that parties' experience in government influences intra-party heterogeneity. The longer a party stays in office, the higher the likelihood that a world event or crisis occurs that forces leaders to make unpopular policy decisions.<sup>31</sup> Parties with long term successes in government become filled with actors with more disparate and pragmatic policy goals,<sup>32</sup> but they stick with the party leader because their primary interest is to stay in power. Furthermore, economic conditions and coalition governance encourages compromises on a diverse set of policies.<sup>33</sup> Perceptions of government accountability and competence may influence the intra-party distribution of preferences and factional dominance. Negative evaluations of the party's leadership also encourage challenges to the party's direction.

Like studies of economic voting, we assume that voters hold parties accountable for the economy.<sup>34</sup> As the most salient topic and ideological cleavage in most modern democracies, the economy provides a clear measure of the government's success. We argue that party members and intra-party challengers also use the economy to evaluate the party's competencies and popularity. Challengers are unlikely to distinguish themselves from the current leadership when the party is perceived to be performing well.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, intra-party groups will express their discontent with the party's direction when the public perceives the party as incompetent or unaccountable.

The effect of perceptions of competence depends on parties' position in government or the opposition. We predict that party members hold their own leaders

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<sup>31</sup> Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Kitschelt 1989.

<sup>33</sup> Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010; Green and Jennings 2012b; Martin and Vanberg 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis-Beck and Stemaier 2000; Anderson 2007.

<sup>35</sup> We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

to a different standard when they control the cabinet. To govern effectively, leaders require flexibility to cope with changing world events.<sup>36</sup> So long as the party maintains access to government, party leaders emphasize their policy successes and the rewards of office. Leaders can also blame deviations from intra-party preferences on voter demands.<sup>37</sup> Evidence suggests that party members hold realistic expectations about the government leaders' ability to enact uncompromised policies; government participation forces them to respond to voters, adhere to budgetary constraints and compromise with coalition partners to stay in office.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, members of governmental parties place additional value on supporting the party leader, since their continued participation in government demands internal support.<sup>39</sup>

Altogether, this implies that the ability to challenge the party's leadership is limited in government. Unlike voters, party members value intra-party unity and support the leadership when it is in government. We predict that party members support their leadership despite poor economic conditions. This leads to fewer speakers proposing alternate deviations from the party leadership's goals or less internal disagreement.

With few governing rewards for leaders to counterbalance negative perceptions, members of parties in the opposition become less forgiving of broad perceptions of incompetence. Studies of issue competition show that voters perceive parties' competencies as connected. When the economy performs well, voters

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<sup>36</sup> Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010.

<sup>37</sup> See for example Carey 2009; Kam 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Kitschelt 1989; Seyd and Whitely 1990; Harmel and Janda 1994.

<sup>39</sup> See for example, Cox and McCubbins 1993 and 2005; Huber 1996; Döring 2003; Ceron 2013; Kenig Philippov and Rahat 2013. Parties in government may also require internal support in the face of votes of confidence.

perceive opposition parties as less competent and government parties as more competent.<sup>40</sup> Perceptions of incompetent or unpopular leaders create the opportunity for entrepreneurial party members to influence the party's policy direction. By expressing alternate prescriptions, party members hope to draw the party's policies in their preferred direction. Party members might express competing strategies for future policy success, such as incremental versus pure policy approaches, given uncertainty about future electoral successes.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the range of preferences expressed at national meetings likely increases for opposition parties when the economy performs strongly. A weak economy leads the range of preferences at the party meeting to shrink, as the party leadership benefits from improved voter perceptions. We summarize this logic in the following hypotheses.

*H2a) In the opposition, positive economic performance increases intra-party disagreement.*

*H2b) In government, poor economic performance does not increase intra-party disagreement.*

In general, we predict that intra-party disagreement increases when the party is perceived to have failed, but rallies around party leaders when they are in government. In particular we predict that perceptions of incompetence among party members develop when a party has just lost an election or for opposition parties when the sitting government benefits from a strong economy. Building on this

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<sup>40</sup> Green and Jennings 2012a and 2012b.

<sup>41</sup> Kitschelt 1989.

approach, we argue in the next section that the outcome of party leadership elections depends on these statements of preferences as well as their broader election context.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIVERGENT PREFERENCES

We theorize that the causes of intra-party preference heterogeneity are linked to parties' experience in government. The consequences of divergent intra-party preferences also hold important implications for parties' leaderships. Building on both the spatial and organizational perspectives, we theorize that political parties are dynamic organizations. As organizations, the parties' leaderships depend on the support of intra-party groups to stay in power.<sup>42</sup> Recent reforms that increased intra-party democratization over the party's leadership selection, however, decreased the degree of internal competition. More candidates compete, but fewer candidates perform well.<sup>43</sup> Like parliaments and other organizations, we expect that the internal distribution of preferences influences internal votes for the party's leadership and outputs.

Spatial theories assume that party leaders will hold preferences somewhere close to the party's median position.<sup>44</sup> We expect that the rules for selecting leaders likely influence the specific leaders chosen and leaders' incentives for making statements of preferences.<sup>45</sup> Although the rules for selecting party leaders differ

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<sup>42</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994.

<sup>43</sup> Kenig 2009b.

<sup>44</sup> Laver and Shepsle 1996; Tsebelis 2002.

<sup>45</sup> Innovative research by Kenig (2009a and 2009b) also focuses on the role of intra-party rules on leadership selection showing that the size of the leadership's selectorate influences the number of candidates and degree of competition within the party for leadership positions.

across parties, we predict that elections for the party's top leadership position will reflect competitive dynamics much like Downs' expectations for plurality based elections.<sup>46</sup> From this perspective, party leaders selected using plurality based election rules are likely somewhere close to the party's median ideological position.

In most parties, there can only be one top party leader; the candidate with the most votes wins. However, prominent examples exist in which parties divide over multiple candidates. Take for example, the French *Parti Socialiste* in the early 1990s. At the *Congrès de Rennes*, three candidates each received approximately just over a quarter of the party's vote.<sup>47</sup> A single faction or group may dominate parties for an extended period of time, but changes to the distribution of intra-party factions may increase the uncertainty over which faction gains the party's support.<sup>48</sup> In addition to a single top leader, many parties also have multitier structures that include committees of various sizes that assist the elected party leader.

We argue that candidates for the party leadership signal the relative location of their preferences to build support within the party.<sup>49</sup> Applying this logic to intra-party politics, two candidates under plurality election rules will emphasize preferences close to the median voter's position. In this context, the candidate that gains support from the median voter wins the election. Candidates for the party leadership will signal that their preferences are close to the median party member's position.

Rational leadership candidates would select the median position if they only valued winning intra-party elections. Numerous reasons lead candidates to express

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<sup>46</sup> Downs 1957.

<sup>47</sup> Bergounioux and Grunberg 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994; Harmel and Tan 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Downs 1957.

statements of preferences that diverge from the median intra-party voter. Candidates face uncertainty about the exact distribution of preferences and the location of the median intra-party voter. Furthermore, candidates rely on internal party networks and factions that seek to pull their preferences away from the median position. For example, Ceron shows that party factions in Italy constrain party leaders' ability to dominate the party's position.<sup>50</sup> Disagreements over the party's broad strategy also encourage party leaders to deviate from the intra-party median position. Election minded leaders seeking to avoid the appearance of later "U-Turns" or "flip-flops" may try to balance their statements in anticipation of a general election. This tactic would cause candidates to emphasize policies that fall somewhere between the party and the electorate's preferences. Party members also disagree over whether to emphasize pure policy goals or more incremental reforms.<sup>51</sup> These disagreements manifest themselves in party leadership candidates seeking to distinguish themselves from their competition based on their policy statements.<sup>52</sup>

Factors that more broadly influence parties' short and long term electoral strategy will also manifest as intra-party disagreements. Elected officials and prominent party members have pre-existing reputations.<sup>53</sup> These candidates face difficulties in responding to changes in public opinion or the positions of the party's

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<sup>50</sup> Ceron 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Kitschelt 1989.

<sup>52</sup> See for example Marx and Schumacher's (2013) analysis of intra-party conflict over policy rigidity and change in Social Democratic Parties in Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

<sup>53</sup> Studies of economic voting (Lewis-Beck and Stegmeier 2000), issue ownership (Green and Jennings 2012) and policy accountability (Carey 2009; Kam 2009) often emphasize parties' and leaders' policy reputations.

electorate without appearing at odds with their reputation.<sup>54</sup> In this context, key votes for the party leadership provide the party's membership with the opportunity to select between candidates with historical policy reputations and new competitors. Party member votes in this context serve as the way that parties negotiate difficult questions of policy reform and strategy in response to changing political conditions.

Assuming that party members at congresses vote for the candidate with preferences closest to their own, we predict that those candidates with more extreme preferences gain less support from intra-party groups. Candidates closer to the ideological center are more likely to attract a broad range of support. Like elections in other arenas, alternate election rules might lead candidates to hold more diverse preferences.<sup>55</sup> In our next hypothesis, we predict that the relative distance from the ideological center influences the amount of votes a candidate receives;

*H3) Candidates farther from the ideological center of the party receive less support than ideologically central candidates.*

Although we hypothesize that ideological distance generally matters for party leadership elections, we also predict that the party's government status moderates the effect of candidates' statements of preference. As we predict for intra-party heterogeneity in our second hypothesis (H2), the consequence of deviating from the median are different for government and opposition parties. Government leaders are

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<sup>54</sup> Schumacher 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Carey and Shugart 1995. Elections for the French party leadership are based on a plurality election of the party congress, whereas elections for most positions in the SPD and the CDU use the Block Vote.



forced to respond to develop policies in response to rapidly changing world events.<sup>56</sup>

In this context, party leaders will emphasize their success at implementing policies and the benefits of controlling government institutions more generally. Following from a principal-agent perspective, leaders can also use voter preferences to explain policy deviations from their stated preferences, as if party members are competing principals with voter groups.<sup>57</sup> Intra-party groups, therefore, will place greater emphasis on their policy records, even if they deviate from the party's median.

In contrast to government party leaders, those in the opposition have fewer external demands to deviate from the party median's preferences. Instead, they face greater incentives from within the party to adhere to the median position. On the one hand, opposition leaders and candidates are freed from external constraints on their statements of preferences. Unlike governing parties, which demand compromise flexibility and intra-party unity to effectively govern, opposition parties do not have a concurrent policy record and reputation that they must address in their policy statements. On the other hand, party members demand greater ideological purity in this context because there are fewer external incentives to govern effectively or responsibly.<sup>58</sup> Without obvious policy compromises and rewards from participation in government, members will be less forgiving of deviations away from their preferences when the party is in the opposition. Instead, they primarily choose to support candidates espousing preferences most similar to their own. As we hypothesize in our second hypothesis, this increased competition emerges as

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<sup>56</sup> Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Numerous studies from a principal-agent perspective argue that government leaders face demands from multiple competing principals. For example see Carey 2009 or Kam 2009.

<sup>58</sup> Kitschelt (1989) argues that opposition parties attract more ideologically rigid activists, while government parties attract more pragmatic activists, seeking incremental changes.

different intra-party groups express a wider range of preferences. Consequently, uncertainty about the distribution of intra-party preferences also increases. Therefore, change in party leaders and broad preferences occur as the median intra-party voter is revealed and chooses between diverse competitors in the opposition. More broadly, intra-party demands for specific policy goals may therefore explain broad differences in parties' electoral campaign tactics when they are in the government versus the opposition.<sup>59</sup> Based on this logic, we predict in our final hypothesis that ideological proximity to the party median matters more for candidates from an opposition party than for candidates whose party is in government.

*H4) Government participation moderates the effect of candidate statements of preference. Ideological distance from the party center decreases support for candidates in opposition parties more than for government parties.*

In summary, we argue that the causes and consequences of intra-party preferences are driven by parties' electoral context and governmental role. More broadly, we think that intra-party factions and party members use speeches at party congresses to signal their internal strength and the location of their ideal preferences. Individual party members speak to signal their preferences and therefore pull leaders' statements of preferences towards their own. Although, in some countries, party leaders control who speaks at party congresses, party delegates from France and Germany are free to participate at the party meetings because the party leadership

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<sup>59</sup> Greene 2014.

seeks to avoid excluding supportive groups.<sup>60</sup> From this perspective, diverse groups within the party send representatives to speak on their behalf at party congresses.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, these speeches closely approximate the preferences of the delegates at these meetings and the preferences of the party membership more broadly. In the next section, we describe our new data set and method of deriving positions from intra-party speech.

## DATA AND METHODS

To test our hypotheses, we collect data on intra-party leadership elections and speeches from four parties in France and Germany. In particular, we analyze intra-party elections and speeches from the national congresses of the *Parti Socialiste* (PS), the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP) in France and the *Christlich Demokratische Union* (CDU) and *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) in Germany. These parties provide a difficult first test of our approach because of their similarities and differences. For example, all four parties have faced historical divisions, have experience in government and the opposition, are hierarchically organized and include strong intra-party factions.<sup>62</sup> Likewise, for each of the parties,

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<sup>60</sup> In our sample, we find no obvious cases where intra-party factional groups are excluded from the parties. Delegates are chosen in the PS as representatives of the regional party organizations. In Germany, delegates represent are also chosen by regional organizations. In each case, there are few practical limitations on the parties' rules for limiting speaking rights.

<sup>61</sup> The selectorate for candidate and leadership elections depends on parties' rules. While many parties are democratizing their rules to increase the groups participating in these elections, the parties in our sample give this responsibility to the party's membership through their delegates at national meetings. For more information about the diversity of parties' selection rules see Kenig 2009b.

<sup>62</sup> Harmel and Tan 2003; Bergounioux and Grunberg 2005.

the primary authority for selecting candidates is the party membership.<sup>63</sup> These similarities mean that our results are likely to hold for parties with comparable organizations and histories elsewhere.

Despite these similarities, the parties also hold a large number of differences. These dissimilarities allow us to test our hypotheses using the logic of a most different systems research design.<sup>64</sup> In particular, the CDU and the UMP tend to hold more conservative ideologies whereas the SPD and the PS both hold social democratic values. The ideologies of the conservative and the social democratic parties diverge and represent different historical constituencies.<sup>65</sup> Broadly, the French and German parties also compete in largely different electoral and institutional frameworks. Germany is a federal, parliamentary system with a mixed-member-proportional election rule while France is a unitary, semi-presidential system with a two-round runoff voting rule.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, if we find evidence that our approach fits our theory for the parties then we can be somewhat confident that the differences between the systems do not contradict our theoretical approach.

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<sup>63</sup> The rules for the selection of the party leadership are formulated in the parties' standing orders. Although, the standing orders have frequently been adapted over the last decades, the authority for selecting the party leadership has remained unchanged. The current rules for the CDU (<http://www.cdu.de/sites/default/files/media/dokumente/121205-statutenbroschuere.pdf>, accessed February 2, 2014), SPD (<http://www.spd.de/partei/Organisation/1658/organisationsstatut.html>, accessed February 2, 2014), PS (<http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/les-statuts-et-le-reglement-interieur>, accessed February 2, 2014) and UMP (<http://www.u-m-p.org/notre-parti/organisation>, accessed February 2, 2014) are all available online. Also see Kenig 2009a and 2009b; Bergounioux and Grunberg 2005 for additional secondary discussion of the parties' internal selection rules.

<sup>64</sup> Przeworski and Teune 1970.

<sup>65</sup> Lipset and Rokkan 1967.

<sup>66</sup> Farrell 2001.

To construct a measure of ideological distance, we require measures of the location of actors' statements of preferences within the party. While there are numerous methods of measuring parties' preferences and representatives' preferences from their behavior in government there are few options available for measuring the preferences of intra-party actors separate from the policy process.<sup>67</sup> Instead, we use a new data source that offers estimates of actors' preferences at parties' national meetings.

To construct our measure, we collected transcripts of parties' national congresses from the parties' websites and using the data archives of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) and the Jean Jaurès Fondation (JJF)<sup>68</sup>. The KAS provides transcripts for all CDU congresses since 1950, although only the transcripts from 1990 onwards are easily machine-readable. The merger of the East German CDU with the West German CDU in 1990 also provides a meaningful time point at which to begin our analysis. Transcripts for the SPD are only available online since 2002. For the PS, the JJF archive contains machine-readable transcripts from their first party congress, the Alfortville Congress, in 1969 until 2000. Transcripts for the UMP are only available in their entirety for the 2004 *Congrès du Bourget*. This results in 453 observations that also gave speeches at the national meeting for the

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<sup>67</sup> Loewenberg 2008.

<sup>68</sup>The KAS data archive can be accessed under <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/71.8936/> and the FJJ archive under <http://www.jean-jaures.org/Le-Centre-d-archives-socialistes/Base-de-donnees-des-debats>. We collected the texts from these sites in April and May 2013. We collected transcripts from the UMP and the SPD from their websites: <http://www.u-m-p.org/notre-parti/dates-cles#2004>, accessed January 27, 2014 and [http://www.spd.de/partei/Beschluesse/1896/parteitags\\_beschluesse.html](http://www.spd.de/partei/Beschluesse/1896/parteitags_beschluesse.html), accessed February 2, 2014. Data on French intra-party candidate votes comes from <http://www.france-politique.fr/> accessed 5/23/2013.

CDU and 166 observations for the SPD. We include 49 observations for party leadership candidate votes from 1969 to 2000 for the PS and 3 observations from 2004 for the UMP.<sup>69</sup>

We downloaded the transcripts from the foundations' and parties' websites and converted them into plain text files.<sup>70</sup> We then created separate files for every speech given by delegates at each party congress. To ensure that the speeches convey ideological preferences of the individual speaker, we removed all interjections and all speeches announcing other speakers or discussing procedural rules of the party congress. Our sample contains 1649 speeches from the CDU covering 23 national party congresses from 1990-2011, 831 speeches from the SPD covering 13 congresses from 2002-2013, 1138 speeches from the PS covering 21 congresses from 1969-2000 and speeches from the UMP covering one congress in 2004.

Having constructed our sample, we use *WORDFISH*<sup>71</sup> to estimate the party delegates' ideological positions. *WORDFISH* is a statistical scaling model that draws on word frequencies to estimate policy positions in text documents.<sup>72</sup> The underlying assumption of the model is that the count  $y$  of words  $j$  in a document  $i$  is distributed according to a Poisson distribution:

$$y_{ij} \sim \text{Poisson}(\lambda_{ij})$$

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<sup>69</sup> The full listing of speeches at party national congresses for the UMP is only available for 2004 on [ump.org/](http://ump.org/) (Accessed 1/27/2014). We were unable to find transcripts of speeches for the UMP's parent parties. Speeches are unavailable for party congresses following 2004.

<sup>70</sup> A lack of full transcripts of speeches in any format greatly limits our potential sample.

<sup>71</sup> Slapin and Proksch 2008.

<sup>72</sup> The model can be implemented in the statistical programming language *R* using the package *Austin* developed by Will Lowe (2011).

The parameter  $\lambda$  is the mean and the variance of the distribution and takes the following functional form:

$$\lambda_{ij} = \exp(\alpha_i + \psi_j + \beta_j * \omega_i)$$

where  $\alpha$  are a set of text fixed effects controlling for the length of the document,  $\psi$  is a set of word fixed effects controlling for words that are generally used more frequently than others,  $\beta$  is an estimate of the word specific weight capturing the importance of word  $j$  in discriminating between policy positions, and  $\omega$  is the estimate of the speaker  $i$ 's policy position. We are interested in the latter two parameters. To identify the model, both  $\alpha$  and the mean of all speaker positions is set to 0 and the standard deviation is set to 1.

In contrast to other scaling approaches such as *WORDSCORES*,<sup>73</sup> *WORDFISH* does not require reference documents with known positions on predefined policy dimensions. It only requires that the documents used in the analysis reflect the authors' policy position on a single dimension. We estimate separate models for each party and each party congress using all meaningful speeches as data. We therefore expect that the dimension underlying the data corresponds to a basic left-right policy dimension.<sup>74</sup> Before we scale the documents we prepare the data by removing stop words, numbers, punctuation and words that appear in nearly all of the documents. We also apply the German and French Porter stemming algorithm to reduce words to their word stems.

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<sup>73</sup> Laver et al. 2003.

<sup>74</sup> Given our interest in the relative location and distance from the median position for each congress, we are indifferent to the substantive content of the underlying dimension so long as it represents the primary form of contention within the party. See the Appendix for a discussion of the content of the underlying dimension.

After applying the model, *WORDFISH* returns position estimates for each document text. Figure 1 displays the positions of some prominent members of the PS from the 2000 national party congress in Grenoble. The black dots are the position estimates of the speakers listed on the y-axis and the lines around the dots are 95 percent confidence intervals. The distribution of estimates suggests that the positions of these speakers were quite divided during the party congress. The range of positions shown goes from Lionel Jospin on the right to Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the very left of the dimension. The other delegates have positions near or just left or right of the ideological center.

**Positions of PS speakers at the 2000 congress in Grenoble**

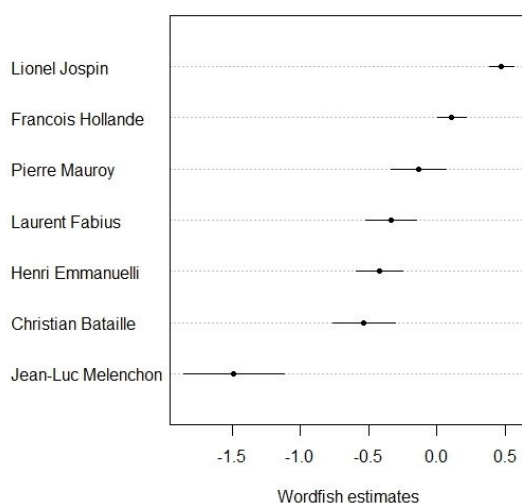


Fig. 1. Positions of PS speakers

Taken at face value, we argue that these estimates appear internally valid. In particular, we might expect that the speeches given by the party chief François Hollande, Pierre Mauroy and Laurent Fabius should be relatively close as they all supported the motion proposed by Prime Minister Jospin. Similarly, we would expect that Henri Emmanuelli and Christian Bataille would be ranked to the left of Jospin's supporters. Emmanuelli and Bataille strongly criticized the prime minister's



business-friendly social policies and founded a faction entitled “Democracy and Equality” (*Démocratie - Égalité*) that called for more anti-capitalist policies.

Similarly, an accurate measure of policy preferences would also rank Jean-Luc Mélenchon further to the left of Emmanuelli and Bataille as he represented the most extreme faction, the Socialist Left (*Gauche Socialiste*). This faction also opposed Jospin and demanded radical reforms to counter treats of globalization (Bergounioux and Grunberg 2005).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Emmanuelli and Mélenchon later founded a common faction called the New World (*Nouveau monde*). Furthermore, Mélenchon left the PS in 2008 to found the Parti de Gauche (PG) in response to Ségolène Royal’s victory at the 2008 party leadership election. The positions of the speakers illustrated in Figure 1 correspond closely to the speakers’ respective factions. Jospin, Hollande, Mauroy and Fabius are all close to the center or just to the right of it. Emmanuelli and Bataille are slightly left of the center and Mélenchon is farther to the left.

Like the example presented in Figure 1, we estimate separate *WORDFISH* models for each national congress. We then test our first and second hypotheses using a measure of intra-party disagreement based on the *WORDFISH* estimates. In particular, to determine whether intra-party disagreement increases after parties suffer electoral losses for government positions we calculate the total variance of actors’ preferences for each national congress. We then use this variance as the dependent variable in our second analysis.

The primary independent variables predicting intra-party heterogeneity are electoral success, government experience, and economic conditions. We operationalize electoral success as the change in the percentage vote the party received in the following national parliamentary elections. We also include the percentage vote for presidential elections in France (treating this variable as zero for

German parties). Similarly, we operationalize experience in government using a dummy variable indicating whether the party is part of the governing cabinet or controls the presidency in France (treating this variable as zero for German parties). We then include an interaction of government incumbency with the change in annual GDP growth from the OECD.<sup>75</sup>

As our second dependent variable, we use the percentage vote for party leadership candidates at party national congresses. For the CDU and the SPD, we use the total percentage of votes that each party leadership candidate received during a national congress. The CDU leadership consists of the party leader, the general secretary, four deputy leaders, seven party chairs and 26 extended board members. The SPD's leadership follows a similar structure, including the party leader, general secretary, five deputy leaders and 42 extended board members. While elections for the top leadership positions for both parties are frequently uncontested votes of affirmation, elections for the extended board frequently face greater contestation. Like the deputy leaders and party chairs, the extended board members are elected using a Block Vote, or at-large plurality, system in which each voter can cast votes for as many candidates as there are positions available.<sup>76</sup> This system potentially allows a majority group, even if it is barely a majority, to control 100 percent of the positions. Carey and Shugart explain that this form of voting encourages candidates in national elections to develop their personal reputation, rather than the faction's reputation, as the district magnitude increases.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For additional information on the *WORDFISH* technique and additional robustness checks see the online Appendix at the author's website: <http://zacgreene.com/>.

<sup>76</sup> According to the IDEA, Block Voting systems are used in federal elections in the Falkland Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, the Maldives, Mauritius, Montserrat, Saint Helena, and Syria.

<sup>77</sup> Carey and Shugart 1995.

Because the French parties, the PS and the UMP, vote for a slate of candidates or a “motion”, rather than for a candidate, we use the total percentage of votes that each motion received during a national congress. Each motion includes a series of policy proposals for the platform and a list of leaders. For each motion, we identify the main initiator and future party leader and add the total percentage of votes that the motion received.<sup>78</sup>

We use the percentage votes for the candidates for the German parties and for each motion submitted in the French parties as the dependent variable in our second set of analyses. We then use our WORDFISH estimates to create a distance measure by calculating the absolute distance between the position of each candidate (initiator) and the median position of speakers at each party congress.<sup>79</sup> We also include some controls that have been found to be important in studies of electoral politics. We include dummy variables for whether the speaker has held the office before for the German parties and a dummy variable for each type of leadership position. We also include a dummy variable for the candidates’ gender to account for the party’s gender quota requiring that one third of the board be female. We then include a dummy variable for the PS and UMP if the motion is supported by the current party leader.

## ANALYSIS I: INTRA-PARTY DISAGREEMENT

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<sup>78</sup> For most motions this is easy because they are generally referred to by the initiator of the motion that will be the new party leader if the motion is successful.

<sup>79</sup> Our results are robust to using the mean or median position.

Our first hypotheses predict that intra-party disagreement increases with electoral losses and parties' experience in the opposition. The results from our analysis indicate support for the hypotheses, although the total number of party congresses limits our ability to perform extensive regression analysis for any individual party. As a preliminary demonstration of our theory, we present graphical evidence for each party.

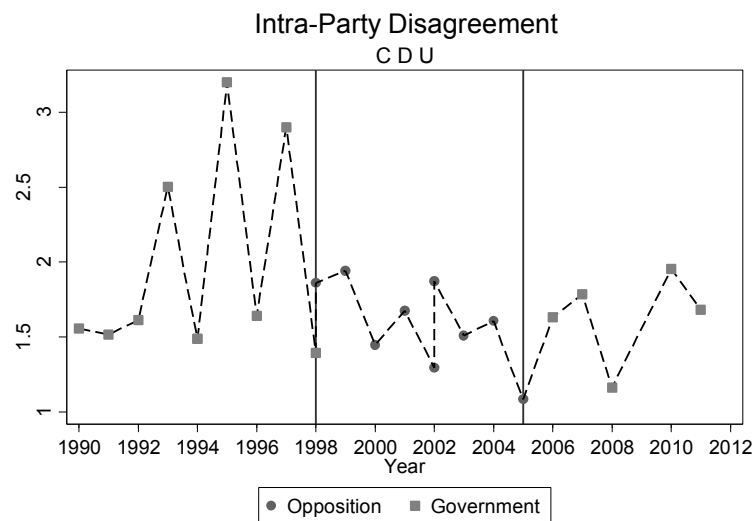


Fig. 2. Intra-Party Disagreement CDU

Figure 2 demonstrates the variance of speakers at the CDU's national congresses. While the CDU was in opposition and faced decreasing levels of disagreement from 1998 to 2005, the levels of disagreement immediately increased following the CDU's electoral victory in that year. However, disagreement decreased in the party congress in 2008 before returning to higher levels after the general election in 2009. Furthermore, the overall trend is somewhat static prior to 1998 and increasing following 2005, while the trend for disagreement is decreasing from 1998 to 2005.

As Figure 3 shows, the SPD follows a similar post election trend as the CDU. Prior to the election in 2009, the SPD participated in coalitions with the Green party (prior to 2005) and then with the CDU. Their exclusion from government after 11

years in 2009 was followed by a large increase in disagreement as the SPD sought to wrestle with their new situation as an opposition party. Observers suggested at this time that the SPD would have to “reinvent itself” by “resolving bitter internal disputes between economic reforms...and the party’s powerful left wing.”<sup>80</sup>

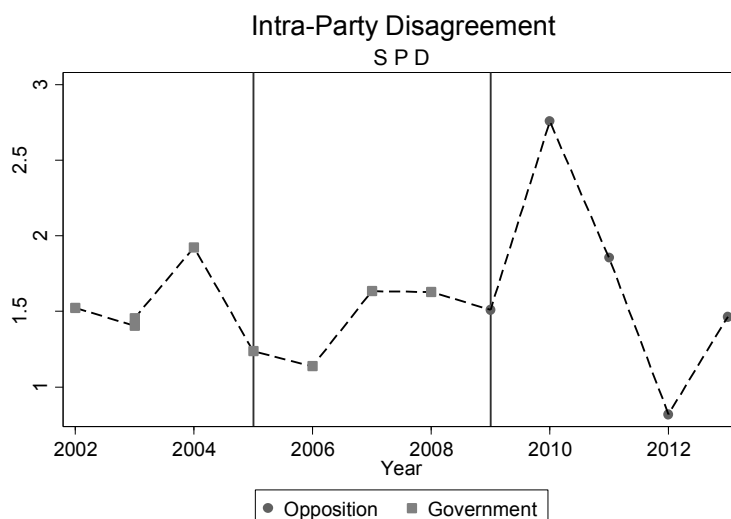


Fig. 3. Intra-Party Disagreement SPD

The graphical results for the PS illustrated in Figure 4 also indicate evidence for the theory. The amount of disagreement for the PS varied substantially prior to the party’s 1981 victory.<sup>81</sup> In contrast to the CDU, disagreement sharply decreased between the party congress prior to the election and the extraordinary party congress immediately following their electoral victory in 1981. Over the following decades, the PS controlled both the Presidency and the Prime Minister for large portions of time. Throughout this period, the PS’ party congresses exhibit a general trend of increased disagreement.

<sup>80</sup> “A New Buzz for Germany.”

<sup>81</sup> The large shifts prior to 1981 likely reflect the changing composition of the party as numerous factions joined or exited the party.

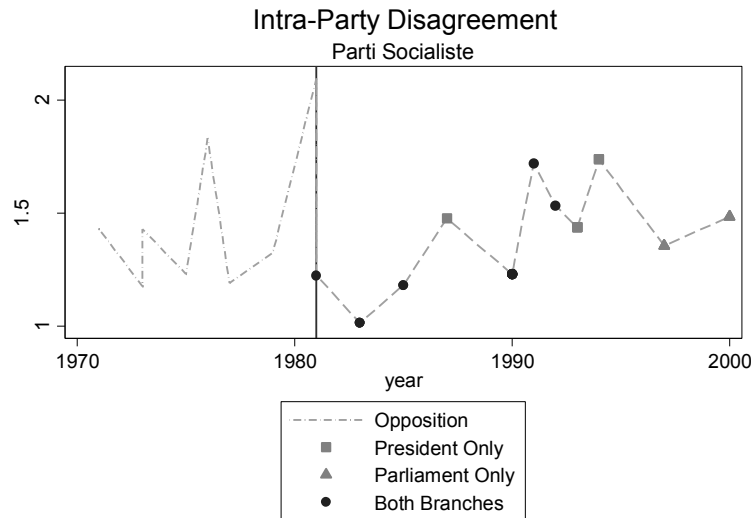


Fig. 4. Intra-Party Disagreement PS

To directly test the first set of hypotheses, we predict the amount of variance at party national congresses based on the parties' experience in government. We first conduct separate analyses before testing the relationship in a combined model. Despite the small number of observations (24, 12, and 19), our analyses yield evidence consistent with our theory.<sup>82</sup>

In the first hypothesis, we predict that intra-party disagreement increases after an electoral loss. Despite the descriptive evidence, Table 1 shows only weak support for this hypothesis. For the German parties and the combined analysis in Table 1, having lost control of government leads to an increase in disagreement, but the coefficient is only significant for the SPD in Model 2. The coefficient is in the wrong direction for the PS. The coefficient for the change in the percent parliamentary vote the parties receive is in the correct direction for the CDU, the PS and in the Combined model, but is in the wrong direction and significant for the SPD. The

<sup>82</sup> Due to the small number of observations, direct interpretation of the significance for the individual party tests should be treated with caution. We also include the estimates for the one party congress from the UMP in Model 4. Excluding the UMP leads to substantively similar inferences.

coefficient for losing control of the presidency in France is only in the correct direction in Model 8, but never reaches statistical significance. Overall, there is at best weak evidence that losing an election leads to increased disagreement based on these estimates (H1). This might reflect Harmel and Janda's perspective that only major electoral losses lead to broad intra-party change.<sup>83</sup>

Table 1 Disagreement at Party National Congresses

	<b>Model 1 CDU</b>	<b>Model 2 SPD</b>	<b>Model 3 PS</b>	<b>Model 4 Combined<sup>84</sup></b>
Government Party	0.292 (0.207)	0.015 (0.342)	-0.143 (0.196)	0.059 (0.128)
$\Delta$ % GDP Growth	-0.888 (6.341)	14.084** (3.502)	4.037 (3.506)	9.434** (2.709)
Government Party X $\Delta$ % GDP Growth	-0.501 (7.305)	-18.362+ (8.994)	-3.481 (13.288)	-10.346* (4.281)
Lost Government	0.288 (0.200)	1.677* (0.601)	-0.315 (0.350)	0.161 (0.204)
$\Delta$ % Parliamentary Vote	-0.004 (0.026)	0.074* (0.026)	-0.023 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.009)
Lost Presidency			-0.004 (0.009)	0.008 (0.006)
$\Delta$ % Presidential Vote			0.045 (0.194)	0.085 (0.109)
PS dummy				-0.339* (0.133)
SPD dummy				-0.204 (0.158)
UMP dummy				-0.309 (0.391)
Constant	1.552*** (0.103)	1.537** (0.318)	1.543*** (0.173)	1.712*** (0.115)
$R^2$	0.080	0.766	0.310	0.266
Root Means Squared Error	0.539	0.314	0.285	0.418
AIC	41.535	7.962	9.808	66.877
BIC	47.426	10.387	16.420	85.105
Observations	24	12	19	56

Standard errors in parentheses. +  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

<sup>83</sup> Harmel and Janda 1994.

<sup>84</sup> Model 8 pools the observations from Model 1, 2 and 3, but also includes the one UMP party congress from 2004. Excluding the UMP leads to nearly identical results.

We demonstrate somewhat stronger evidence in support of the second hypothesis in Table 1. In particular, we argue that the economy influences the internal politics of parties, particularly when they are in the opposition (H2a). The coefficients for the interaction of change in percent GDP growth and the party's government status are in the expected direction for the SPD, PS and the Combined models, and statistically significant for the SPD and the Combined test. Importantly, the constitutive term for change in percent GDP growth is positive in these models; opposition parties face increased disagreement under stronger economic growth. The magnitude of the coefficient for the interaction suggests that government parties may decrease their internal disagreement as the economy grows, but the combined effect does not reach statistical significance. This evidence is consistent with our prediction for government parties in our second hypothesis (H2b).

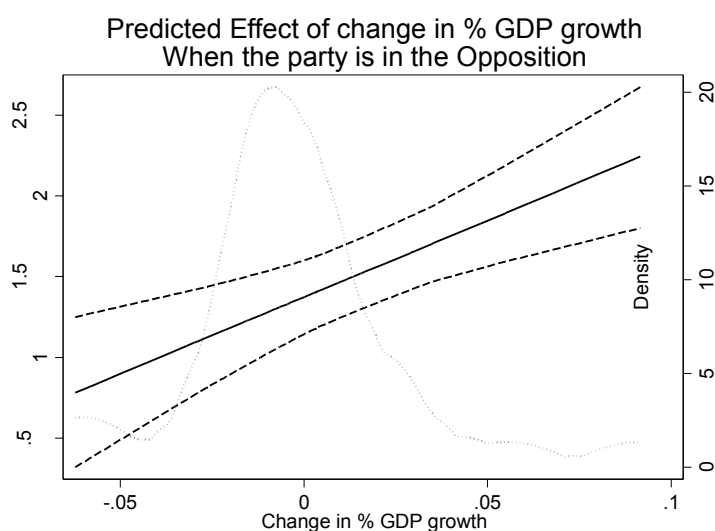


Fig. 5. Predicted effect of the economy on intra-party disagreement.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> The solid line in Figure 5 is the median predicted intra-party disagreement. The dashed lines are the 95 percent confidence intervals based on simulations using 1,000 draws from the estimated variance-covariance matrix from Model 4 in Table 1. Values for the independent variables are set such that the predicted effects are for an opposition party that has not changed its vote or government status in the



Figure 5 illustrates the effect of economic growth. As the rate of growth increases for opposition parties, intra-party disagreement increases. An increase of one standard deviation in percent GDP Growth increases disagreement by .255 or a 16% increase to the mean level of disagreement. This increase likely reflects infighting over control of the party when the leaders expect the party to perform poorly. Disagreement arises when intra-party groups believe that the current leadership is performing poorly. In summary, these results suggest that electoral success may cause parties to act more coherently, but that opposition parties divide when they perceive their current leadership to have failed. This evidence is consistent with our second hypothesis.

## ANALYSIS II: IDEOLOGICAL PROXIMITY AND LEADERSHIP SELECTION

According to hypotheses H3 and H4, candidates for the party leadership will gain more votes from intra-party groups when they are more ideologically central, but that ideological distance is less important with the party is in government. To test these hypotheses, we run separate regression analyses using Ordinary Least Squares regression with robust standard errors for each party first and then in a combined model with random effects that we present in Table 2.<sup>86</sup>

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last election. The dotted line in is the distribution of change in GDP growth rate and refers to the right hand side axis.

<sup>86</sup> We include random effects to account for differences between party congresses. We find substantively similar results using fixed effects, or cluster the standard errors using the party congress as the id variable.

Table 2 Percent Vote in Intra-Party Elections

	Model 5 CDU	Model 6 SPD	Model 7 PS	Model 8 Combined
Ideological Distance	1.085 (1.294)	-6.128* (2.822)	-5.825* (2.493)	-1.524+ (0.832)
Government Party	0.507 (2.198)	-8.241+ (4.534)	-5.706 (13.124)	-1.232 (3.638)
Government Party X Ideological Distance	-0.545 (1.741)	5.754+ (3.452)	9.100 (13.995)	2.457+ (1.463)
Male	-1.866 (1.237)	-0.824 (2.392)	7.927* (3.034)	-0.788 (1.530)
Incumbent Leader	2.222+ (1.322)	5.583* (2.440)	56.140*** (6.749)	4.325*** (1.216)
Member of Parliament	1.896 (1.285)	-0.808 (2.273)	3.414 (3.754)	0.921 (1.163)
General Secretary (CDU and SPD)	-3.628 (2.474)	-20.798*** (5.377)		-9.942*** (2.825)
Deputy Leaders (CDU and SPD)	-13.633*** (2.230)	-8.307* (3.836)		-10.913*** (1.744)
Party Chairs (CDU only)	-25.127*** (2.323)			-26.460*** (3.003)
Extended Board (CDU and SPD)	-19.498*** (1.506)	-38.741*** (3.185)		-25.277*** (2.585)
Single Ballot (France)				-61.765*** (4.787)
Constant	89.610*** (2.758)	97.417*** (5.673)	9.380* (3.886)	91.219*** (2.957)
$R^2$	0.141	0.482	0.754	
Root Means Squared Error	13.010	13.685	16.012	15.865
AIC	3628.959	1349.374	406.890	.
BIC	3674.258	1380.494	418.117	.
Observations	454	166	48	671

Robust standard errors in parentheses. +  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

The results in Table 2 indicate some support for the theory. In particular, ideological distance is in the correct direction for most of the models. Consistent with our third hypothesis (H3), we find that greater ideological distance from the party's ideological center will lead candidates to receive a smaller percentage of the vote. In particular, the coefficients are negative and significant for the SPD and the PS as well as in the full sample in Model 8. Furthermore, the effect of ideological

distance depends on the party's status in government, as the fourth hypothesis (H4) predicts. Consistent with our theory, the coefficient for the interaction of government status and distance is positive in three of the models and significant for the SPD and the full sample. This indicates that ideological distance has a different effect for parties in government. Participation in government causes the effect of distance to disappear as the combined coefficients are no longer significant. As the second hypothesis predicts, candidates in government parties are insulated from the negative effects of their statements.

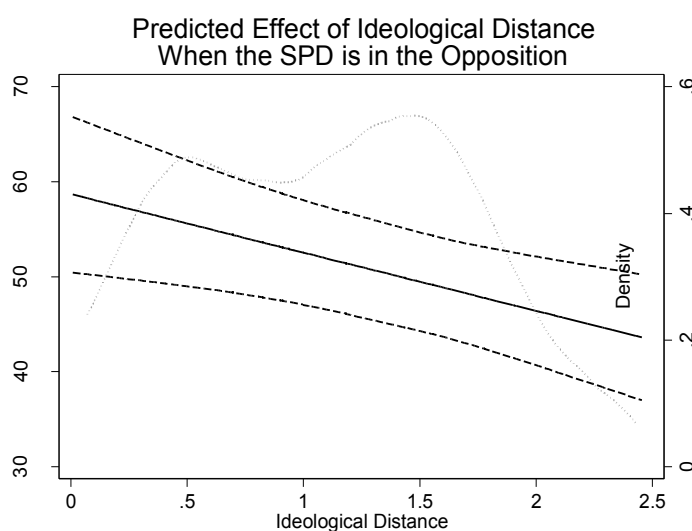


Fig. 6. Predicted effect of ideological distance on percentage candidate vote in the SPD.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> The solid line in Figure 6 is the median predicted change in the percentage vote a candidates receives. The dashed lines are the 90 percent confidence intervals based on simulations using 1,000 draws from the estimated variance-covariance matrix from Model 6 in Table 2. Values for the independent variables are set such that the predicted effects are for a first time female candidate running for a position on the SPD Extended Board that is not a member of parliament when the party is in the opposition. The dotted line is the density of candidate distances and refers to the right hand side axis.

We present this effect graphically in Figure 6 for candidates in the SPD when it is in the opposition. The graph shows that more ideologically distance candidates gain fewer votes than more central candidates. In particular, a decrease of one standard deviation in ideological distance increases the candidate's vote by nearly 4 percent for candidates in the SPD when it is in the opposition.

The control variables in the first set of analyses are mostly in the predicted directions. Men hold an advantage in the PS, but not in the German parties. The difference between these parties may be unsurprising since France only adopted quota laws in 2000.<sup>88</sup> Incumbent candidates earn more support than non-incumbents. Members of parliament also benefit from their position in office in the PS and the CDU, but not the SPD, although the coefficient is never significant. Finally, the dummy variables for the position type also suggest that candidates for lower level positions in the German parties gain a smaller percentage of votes than the candidates for the top leadership position.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results from our analysis provide support for our hypotheses on intra-party politics. Using speeches at party national congresses to measure the preferences of intra-party actors, we find that party leaders with more divergent preferences attract less support from intra-party elections in the SPD and the PS, but more support in the CDU. However, party leaders are generally isolated or protected from their statements when the party participates in government. These results hold up in a pooled analysis with additional data from the UMP. Parties' experiences in government also influence the range of disagreement, although there is at best

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<sup>88</sup> Krook and O'Brien 2010 and 2012.

limited evidence that electoral losses increase intra-party disagreements. Instead, disagreements arise most strongly when opposition parties are perceived as incompetent or unaccountable such as when economic growth increases.

Our analysis provides supportive evidence for numerous studies of party politics. In particular, while party leaders' preferences may be closer to the party's median position, intra-party preferences vary greatly and systematically, depending on the party's experience in government. As mounting research shows,<sup>89</sup> scholars should be wary of assuming that this intra-party preference variation does not influence the party's election and governmental behavior. Intra-party heterogeneity likely influences the degree of cohesion between the party's leaders and their ability to negotiate with potential coalition partners or on policy agreements. Our analysis of intra-party disagreement also provides researchers with a mechanism to study the effect of rules on parties' parliamentary discipline by indicating the extent to which members act cohesively at the intra-party level. By systematically studying intra-party elections we show one way in which intra-party groups may be able to resolve their disputes, through votes at national congresses.

Despite the small number of party congresses and the large ideological and institutional differences between the German and French parties, our results demonstrate that speeches at party national congresses provide useful information about the relative location of actors' preferences. Our approach provides a more direct means of measuring actors' preferences based on their own statements in a setting that is distinct from their behavior in office. However, we caution scholars against making overly large generalizations from our limited sample. Our case selection included parties competing in widely different institutional settings, but

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<sup>89</sup> See for example Kenig 2009b; Ceron 2012; Lehrer 2012.

there are also a number of similarities in the German and French parties which limit the external validity of our study. We are uncertain whether parties with different organizations or which have never participated in government act in similar ways. Also, alternate national or intra-party electoral rules might lead to different outcomes. We expect that future analyses would benefit greatly from the systematic collection and analysis of party congresses in a comparative, cross-national framework. By analyzing intra-party politics we hope to break open the black box of intra-party politics and gain deeper insights into the political process. Using these estimates, we hope that scholars of parliamentary behavior and public policy will be able to improve their ability to predict a wide range of behaviors and outcomes, such as coalition formation and termination, the number and type of public policies, and government oversight behaviors, without the fear that their estimates are endogenous to the processes they are seeking to study.

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